

## **A Look at the General Forgiveness Meditation by Venerable Bhante Vimalaramsi**

At times Venerable Vimalaramsi is asked for a Forgiveness Meditation to do. Especially when someone close to us dies and grief and sometimes guilt arise afterwards, one seeks this kind of a meditation to reduce the suffering.

### **Forgiveness Meditation:**

Forgiveness meditation is a way of opening oneself up to the possibilities of true healing and love for oneself and others. The forgiveness meditation is a soft, gentle way of learning how to lovingly-accept whatever arises and to leave it be, without trying to control it with thoughts.

Sometimes in our lives, there can be a feeling of letting someone down by not doing enough to help them. Of course this is just mind saying I should be better, I should have done better, I failed and I am not worthy and because of that I should suffer even more.

The forgiveness meditation is not ever to be used as a club to beat away a feeling of sadness, or anger, or frustration or any other kind of feeling. Once again, the forgiveness meditation is a soft, gentle way of learning how to lovingly-accept whatever arises and to leave it be, without trying to control it with thoughts.

Of course, these blaming kinds of unwholesome thoughts and feelings don't have anything to do with reality nor does anyone need to blame themselves for their friends or family members decision to take their own life, to die, or dive into depression or other feelings which cause difficulties. It is always a difficult situation to have to cope with and there are a few things that those around this kind of a situation can do for themselves and, in the case of a death or suicide it can help the deceased person as well.

### **Begin to do the forgiveness meditation!**

This meditation is done by sitting down and beginning the forgiveness process by forgiving yourself for:

- 1] not understanding,
- 2] for making mistakes,
- 3] for causing pain to myself or anyone else,
- 4] for not acting the way I should have acted.

The way one does this is by first forgiving themselves. This is done by taking each of these 4 statements, such as "I forgive myself for not understanding" and saying it over and over again then you place that feeling of forgiveness in your heart and radiate that feeling of soft acceptance to yourself. The thing is, mind it tricky and it will sometimes have huge resistance to forgiving yourself and will come up with all kinds of thoughts to distract you and blame yourself. But when you see mind taking off and thinking unwholesome things then gently 6R those thoughts and feelings, then gently redirect your attention back to forgiving yourself again. Sit

with that feeling of loving-acceptance for as long as it lasts, then make the statement again to help the loving-acceptance last for longer.

Mind will naturally have a lot of But... But... But... interruptions and try to distract you and condemn you and then make you feel guilty or sad or angry or whatever it wants to do. This is where patience needs to be cultivated, softly allow those distracting (hindrances) be there and then you gently bring your attention back to forgiving yourself. Do this softly with the 6R's.

Of course your mind will naturally go to the person who died or committed suicide. When that happens then softly, gently, start forgiving them for 1] not understanding, or 2] making mistakes, or 3] for causing pain and suffering to themselves and to you, or 4] for not acting in the way they should have acted.

See them in your mind's eye and look into their eyes and forgive them. Keep repeating one of these statements (whichever one that seems most appropriate at the time) or you can make up your own statement of forgiveness if it seems right. It is best not to get involved with a story with that person in your own mind. It is best to forgive them by using the same statement over and over again. "I forgive you for \_\_\_\_\_".

Then, place that forgiveness into your heart with the person who died and stay with that feeling or forgiveness for as long as it lasts (which at first will not be for very long - to be sure) and when mind becomes distracted softly, gently, 6R that distraction and start over again.

After a period of time (during that sitting) then change things around and hear that person forgiving you for \_\_\_\_\_. Still look into their eyes and hear them say "I forgive you for \_\_\_\_\_. I really do forgive you".

### **Completing the Circle:**

This forgiveness meditation starts by forgiving yourself, then forgiving another person, then you hear them forgive you too. This is a complete circle. It will eventually make things change in your mind so there will not be any guilt or frustration or sadness or anger or making excuses for making mistakes and then feeling hard about yourself. Making excuses about anything means that one doesn't take responsibility for their own actions and this is a subtle attachment to be forgiven and let go of also.

There will develop a loving-acceptance and true feelings of love toward that person who caused so much pain. The pain will diminish until there is only a memory of that person without any experience of the grief.

### **Expanding Forgiveness into your life:**

Now, this is the sitting meditation but there is still more to the meditation and that is to forgive everything and everybody, all of the time. Use this forgiveness as your only object of meditation. Forgive yourself for bumping into something or if cooking for cutting yourself or burning yourself or for making mistakes. Put forgiveness into everything all of the time. Forgive thoughts for distracting you, forgive others for distracting you. In short forgive everything all of the time. When walking from one place to another forgive yourself and/or others. Any tiny distraction, forgive it. Forgive yourself for not remembering, forgive yourself for making mistakes. Forgive every thought, every memory, forgive every pain that arises. 6R and forgive ALL OF THE TIME!!! If you forget to forgive something then forgive yourself for forgetting and then start again.

Do you see what I mean? It may take some time before mind begins to let go of this attachment but patience leads to Nibbana! (eventually). I have helped people in this type of situation and for some of them it has taken as long as 1 year of doing nothing else but the forgiveness meditation before they finally let go of the suffering and pain. This doesn't mean that they still didn't have the memories of what happened. They did. But they could reflect and remember without having any pain or suffering arise. And therein lies the true healing.

So please if you want to do this type of meditation for yourself, it would be best to keep in touch with me at least for a little while so I can help you to stay on the path and get it firmly going.

Grief is very strange stuff because it will come up for periods of time even 6 months after the event took place and strong sadness, frustration, anger etc can arise for no apparent reason. So it is necessary to keep this practice going for quite some time so the attachments will eventually let go.

**Any Questions should be directed to Bhante Vimalaramsi at [bhantev4u@dhammasukha.org](mailto:bhantev4u@dhammasukha.org)**

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